

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENNA 05914 101139Z

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SUBJECT: CROP CONDITIONS IN AUSTRIA, CZECHSLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY

1. FOLLOWING HEAVY RAINS DURING OPENING DAYS JULY IN CENTRAL EUROPE AGATT VISITED A NUMBER OF MAJOR AGRICULTURAL AREAS OF AUSTRIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA TO OBSERVE CROP CONDITIONS. RAINS APPEAR TO HAVE CAUSED WIDE-SPREAD FLOODING AND DAMAGE TO CROPS JUST BEFORE HARVEST. FULL EXTENT OF DAMAGE CANNOT BE ASSESSED TILL HARVEST COMPLETED. A PARTIAL RECOVERY FROM DAMAGE STILL POSSIBLE GIVEN CONTINUING DRY AND SUNNY WEATHER THAT FOLLOWED THE HEAVY AND OFTEN TORRENTIAL RAINS.

2. ALTHOUGH DAMAGE TO CROP COMES ALSO FROM FLOODING IN CERTAIN LOW-LYING AREAS, MOST WILL COME FROM LODGING WHICH MAKES FULL AND EVEN RIPENING OF CROP DIFFICULT. FURTHERMORE BECAUSE OF POSSIBLE WEED
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PAGE 02 VIENNA 05914 101139Z

INFESTATION HARVESTING OF CROPS COULD BE EXTERMELY

SLOW AND DELAYED.

3. SO FAR MOST DAMAGE WAS SUSTAINED BY WINTER WHEAT AND WINTER BARLEY. IN CONTRAST SPRING-SOWN CROPS SUCH AS BARLEY, CORN AND SUGAR BEETS WITHSTOOD THE RAIN WELL.

4. FOLLOWING IS SUMMARY SITUATION FOR EACH COUNTRY.

A. AUSTRIA. HEAVY RAINS IN THE EASTERN AND NORTH-EASTERN PART OF COUNTRY CAUSED WIDESCALE LODGING TO WINTER CROPS WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY WILL CAUSE SOME LOSSES TO CROP. IN THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF COUNTRY NEARLY 40 PERCENT OF THE WHEAT FIELDS WERE FLATTENED. OTHER CROPS LOOKED GOOD. CORN AND SUGAR BEETS EVEN BENEFITED FROM THE RAIN. DESPITE EARLIER OPTIMISTIC FORECASTS FOR GOOD PRODUCTION, RECENT RAINS WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REDUCE EXPECTATIONS FOR A GOOD CROP. GIVEN MORE NORMAL WEATHER, CUTTING OF WHEAT IN EARLY-AM BEST AREAS EXPECTED TO COMMENCE WITH ONE-TO-TWO WEEKS DELAY AROUND JULY 20. FIRST THRESHING RESULTS WILL THEN ENABLE AUTHORITIES TO FORM TENTATIVE OPINION AS TO YIELD REDUCTIONS. HOWEVER, EVEN A SUBSTANTIAL DECLINE IN WHEAT YIELD WOULD NOT CREATE A MAJOR SUPPLY SHORTAGE SINCE THE COUNTRY HAS LARGE CARRYOVER STOCKS OF WHEAT FROM LAST YEAR'S CROP.

B. CZECHOSLOVAKIA. HARDEST HIT AREA WAS THE WESTERN SLOVAKIAN REGION (ADJACENT TO EASTERN AUSTRIA) WHICH USUALLY SUPPLIES ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S GRAIN CROP. SOME 25-30 PERCENT OF THE GRAIN CROPS WAS FLATTENED. MOST DAMAGE WAS DONE TO WINTER WHEAT AND BARLEY. SPRING CROPS WITHSTOOD WELL ALTHOUGH THERE ARE PROBLEMS WITH CORN AND PREPARATIONS ARE ON WAY TO FITTING COMBINE HARVESTERS WITH EQUIPMENT TO RAISE THE EARS OF CORN TO PREVENT HARVEST LOSSES. IN THE SOUTHERN MORAVIAN DISTRICT LODGING WAS NOT AS WIDESPREAD. ABOUT 20 TO 25 PERCENT OF THE WHEAT FIELDS WERE FLATTENED. IN THE CENTRAL BOHEMIAN REGION ON THE OTHER HAND LODGING WAS MORE PREVALENT. WHILE STILL EARLY TO ASSESS QUANTITATIVELY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 VIENNA 05914 101139Z

THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE EARLY JULY RAINS THERE IS INDICATION THAT DESPITE THE 60,000 HECTARE INCREASE IN GRAIN ACREAGE THE 1975 GRAIN CROP COULD FALL SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THE RECORD HARVEST OF 1974 OF 10.3 MIL TONS. IF LODGING LOSSES BECOME EXTENSIVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA WILL BE IN NEED OF LARGER IMPORTS IN 1975/76 THAN A YEAR BEFORE.

C. HUNGARY. ALTHOUGH AGATT HAD NO CHANCE
YET TO SURVEY CROP CONDITIONS IN HUNGARY REPORTS
FROM NEWS MEDIA INDICATE SERIOUS DAMAGE TO CROP
THROUGH FLOODING AS WELL AS THROUGH LODGING (SEE
ALSO BUDAPEST 2130). REPORT ON CROP DAMAGE WILL
FOLLOW SEPTTEL. MOWINCKEL

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